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GOVERNOR KEEPS UP EFFORTS TO SUPPORT RETURNING VETERANS Hosts Tucson Roundtable of Military, Community, Faith-Based Leaders

PHOENIX – Governor Janet Napolitano continued her efforts to foster cooperation in support of returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and their families, hosting a roundtable of military, community, and faith-based leaders today in Tucson to focus on how they can work together to support returning veterans.

“Our veterans and their families sacrifice greatly for our security, and we have to make sure that we are all supporting them when they return home,” Governor Napolitano said. “For a loved one to return from a war zone is often a very difficult transition, and we have to work together to make sure veterans and their families are getting all the support they need from Arizona communities.”

Today’s meeting in Tucson builds upon the inaugural roundtable held earlier this year in Phoenix that kicked off the Governor’s efforts to bring groups together to form local support networks for veterans and their families. At today’s meeting, the Governor emphasized the importance of finding innovative ways to serve the growing number of women veterans, in anticipation of a conference on women veterans in the spring. The Governor also emphasized the need to serve the large number Arizona veterans who are Native American – a group that serves in the military at a higher per capita rate than any other racial or ethnic group in the United States.

The roundtable provides a forum to share strategies and to bolster local networks that support veterans. There are resources available to returning veterans and their families through many groups across Arizona. A list of these resources is available via Governor Napolitano’s Web site at www.azgovernor.gov.

These roundtables are part of broader efforts to support Arizona’s veterans and military families:

- Arizona established the Military Family Relief Fund to provide financial assistance to family members of military personnel killed or wounded in the line of duty, and who were deployed from a military base in Arizona or were members of the Arizona Army or Air National Guard.
- Tuition waivers are available to the children and spouses of military members who are residents of Arizona or stationed in Arizona and are killed in the line of duty.
- By year’s end, a veterans’ benefits counselor, trained to help veterans access benefits to which they are entitled, will be within an hour’s drive of virtually every Arizona veteran.

- The state income tax exemption for the military income of service members on active duty is now permanent. The Governor also signed legislation this year to protect members of the military from losing professional licenses while on active duty.

For more information about the Office of the Governor, please visit www.azgovernor.gov.